[c3]

[c5]

[c7]



[c1] We claim as our invention the following:

A golf ball having reduced susceptibility of cracking of a cover, the golf ball produced in accordance with the method comprising: forming a golf ball precursor product having a first volume; heating the golf ball precursor product at a predetermined temperature and for a predetermined time period to achieve a predetermined volumetric thermal expansion of the golf ball precursor product, the golf ball precursor product increasing from the first volume to a heated volume; and applying a cover over the golf ball precursor product with the heated volume, the

[c2] 2.The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein the cover is composed of a thermosetting polyurethane material.

cover applied through an exothermic reaction.

3.The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein heating the golf ball precursor product to a predetermined temperature comprises convection heating the golf ball precursor product to a temperature within the range of about 120 °F to about 180 °F.

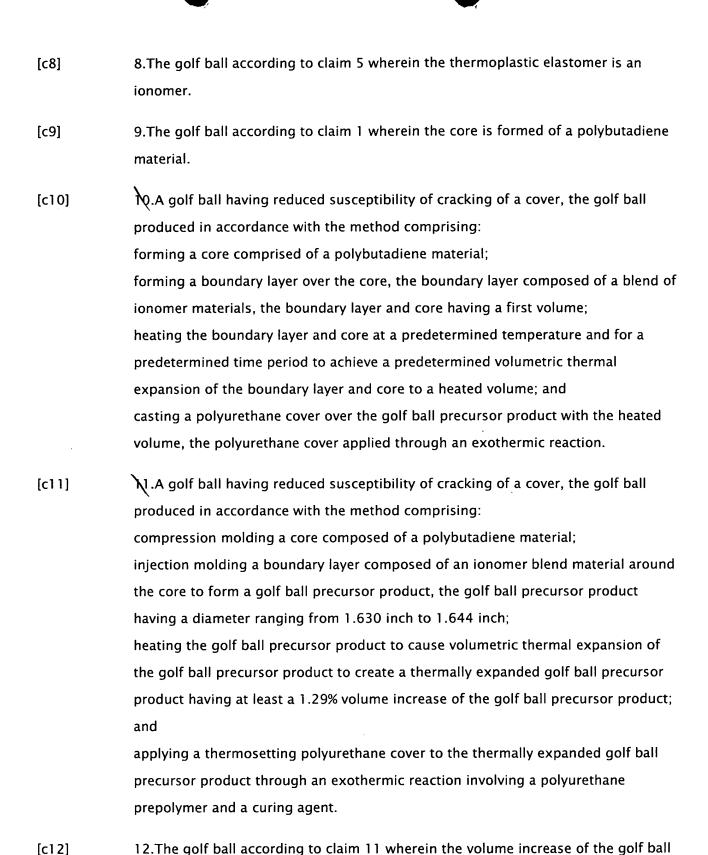
[c4] 4.The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein heating the golf ball precursor product to a predetermined temperature comprises convection heating the golf ball precursor product to a temperature within the range of about 140 °F to about 160 °F.

5. The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein forming a golf ball precursor product comprises forming a core and applying at least one boundary layer over the core.

[c6] 6.The golf ball according to claim 1 wherein heating the golf ball precursor product to a predetermined temperature comprises microwave heating the golf ball precursor product.

7. The golf ball according to claim 5 wherein the at least one boundary is a thermoplastic elastomer.

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precursor product is between 1.3% and 2.41%.